

BW 346
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Rev. J. Rees' Sermon at
Cheltenham, 1817.

With Rev. J. M. Byron's
Reply to it, &c., 1817.

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Wes. 1391

THE
SUBSTANCE
OR
A SERMON,
PREACHED AT
PORTLAND CHAPEL,
CHELTENHAM,
ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 1817,
BY THE
REV. J. REES, OF RODBOROUGH:
TOGETHER WITH
ALL THE COMMUNICATIONS
WHICH WERE
ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR
OF THE
CHELTENHAM CHRONICLE,
BY
AMOR VERITATIS, THE REV. J. REES,
A LOVER OF TRUTH,
AND THE
REV. J. BYRON, OF CHELTENHAM,
On the Subject of the said Sermon.

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EXTRACTS
FROM THE
CHELTEHAM CHRONICLE.

Thursday, April 3, 1817.

TO THE EDITOR.

ANTINOMIANISM * UNMASKED;

OR,

*Remarks on the Religion taught at Portland Chapel,
Cheltenham.*

Mr. EDITOR,—I request from you, for once, the privilege you often grant to others, namely, an opportunity of expressing my sentiments on a serious subject, through the medium of your

* ANTINOMIANISM is the religion of Antimonians, comes from the word "Antinomos,"—against the law, whether of Christ or Moses. An Antinomian allows the law to be a rule of life, but not of judgment, for believers, and thus he destroys the law at a stroke; it being evident, that a rule, the personal observance or non-observance of which Christ's subjects cannot be acquitted or condemned, is no law to them:—he calls good works dung, dross, and filthy rags, and that they only hinder salvation. A consistent Antinomian is so in practice as well as theory, believing himself complete and perfect in a finished salvation; so, if he should be inclined to take his neighbour's ewe lamb, turn thief, adulterer, or murderer, yet it will never for a moment interrupt his being in the favour of God, and with Christ: it is true he will not enjoy the comfortable scene of salvation, but God will one day, by his irresistible power, restore him to the joys of salvation on earth, and he will sing the louder in heaven for all his crimes.

paper ; a favour which I could not otherwise enjoy.—On Wednesday evening the 26th of March, having an hour to spare, I went to hear a Rev. Preacher, who I understand has visited Cheltenham weekly, for some time. Living in habits of friendship with good men of different religious denominations in this neighbourhood, I went to the place in the spirit of both attention and candour, hoping to hear some leading truths of the Gospel, wherein the pious of most congregations agree, that would either enlighten the mind or purify the heart ; but I heard nothing but what excited pain, astonishment and indignation,—that a professedly Protestant Minister should, in visiting a strange town, and to a mixed congregation, in the 19th century, deal out his dogmas with as much confidence as if he had a croud of people who had never seen or heard of the Bible : he brought to my mind that vulgar saying, “ Every bigot has a Pope in his own belly.”

The text was taken from Psalm 51st, verse the 12th, “ Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.”—I am not going, sir, to trouble you and the public with minor opinions in theology, as I enjoy the privilege of thinking for myself, in our free and highly favoured country ; so I wish from my heart every fellow citizen to enjoy the same : and, let his opinions be ever so erroneous, pro-

vided he keep them to himself, and do not interrupt the order of civil society, I think no one ought to interfere; but if any man, or class of men will deliver erroneous and dangerous opinions to the public, and assert that they are speaking "truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," it alters the case.

The Rev. Preacher considered David as the first Saint that ever lived. To this I have a serious objection; we have many more exalted characters, both in the Old and New Testament, than David ever was—Moses and Samuel, Noah, Job and Daniel, in the former; St. Paul and St. John in the latter, with many more: indeed we have few more exceptionable characters among all the pious recorded in the Scriptures than David. But at present we have only to do with the Rev. speaker's observations respecting the fall of David, and salvation in general. His first assertion was, "that the greatest error of the present day is, mens' thinking that they have something to do, in order to obtain the salvation of their souls or to work with God, because the salvation of the Elect is a finished salvation."

2ndly, "That nothing in time, nothing in eternity, can interrupt this salvation, and that all which David lost by his adultery and murder, was the present joy of his salvation."

He was even then in as safe a state as before! No, he was not only for a *day or week*, but for

months an impenitent adulterer and most treacherous and deliberate murderer,—and these characters are as incompatible with salvation, or believing, as Heaven is irreconcileable with hell and Christ with Belial!! Let the candid judge, while I set before them the dark and dismal state of the fallen monarch. The Rev. Minister asserted, over and over again, he was in a state of salvation.

First, I would observe, he was a man that ought to have punished with death every adulterer in his kingdom, instead of committing it. 2ndly, An aged man, not having the plea of any youthful desires. 3dly, He had many wives, Uriah had but one; and he being a high professor of religion was an increase of his guilt; as Nathan said unto him, it made the enemies of God to blaspheme. 4thly, His striving to make Uriah instrumental in fathering his spurious brood: but herein he was disappointed—the brave and self-denying soldier slept with David's guards; but Satan, who had got the fallen Monarch in his infernal toils, rushes him on into deeper guilt, and crime after crime; for he plots the intoxication and murder of the man he had injured. 5thly, Consider, the person murdered was not his enemy, or a man of little consequence, but one of his noble and valiant captains, fighting his battles in the field. To complete the horrid tragedy, he makes his general an

accomplice in his guilt, and cuts off many brave men to gratify one base passion. How prodigal of the blood of his chosen subjects, to gratify his filthy and impure appetite!—how is the good shepherd of Israel turned into a devouring wolf, or royal tyger, destroying the flock, for the sake of the poor man's ewe lamb!!

Without metaphor, if this is not murder, with *malice propense*, I have never read of any; and if this is not sinning unto death, and serving the devil, I confess I know not what is. I am persuaded there never was any one in a state of condemnation, if a man committing such a series of crimes is in a state of salvation. Yet this is the Rev. Gentleman's salvation; such a state of salvation, I am sure, instead of its being worth the blood of God, as he professes, is not worth the blood of a goat. If David, I repeat it, was then and there, while wallowing in the filth of adultery, and imbruining his hands in innocent blood, in *a safe state*, as the Rev. gentleman declared, *farewell Christianity! farewell heathen morality! farewell common decency and common sense!* we are come to the *ne plus ultra* of *Antinomianism!* *truth and virtue, law and gospel, natural and revealed religion, are buried in one common grave!* Is this the wise man, that gravely advised the Rev. Mr. S. to be guarded in preaching Calvinism, so as not to alarm unbelievers? What can the wildest ranter say more, and what

can Satan himself desire more, to people his dreary regions, than that men, committing the vilest crimes, are sure of heaven: for if a man, committing adultery and deliberate murder, be in a safe state of soul, why may not a drunkard, a liar, a swearer, a traitor, &c. be accomplishing God's decrees, and in a state of salvation too? And how shall we then know a child of God from that of the wicked one; a believer from an unbeliever; a state of grace from a state of sin and rebellion against God? Is not this stripping the Christian Church of the glorious garment of holiness? Is not this exposing her to horrid derision, without so much as a scrap, I shall not say of exalted piety, but of heathen morality, to keep her decent, before a world of mocking infidels? Hath not this doctrine driven Geneva, and many in other places, headlong into deism? and is it not likely to have the same effect upon all who can draw a just inference from such dangerous premises,—viz. that if any one can fancy himself to be of the *gay elect*, he may commit the most horrid crimes,—and that not only for ten months, but all his life,—and it will no more interrupt his finished salvation, than reforming, weeping, praying, preaching, &c. can interrupt the finished damnation of countless millions of reprobates? From such doctrine, and such delusion, Good Lord deliver us.

AMOR VERITATIS.

To the Editor of the Cheltenham Chronicle.

MR. EDITOR,—I am almost a stranger in Cheltenham, having only visited it five times; and on my arrival last night, I was informed of some remarks upon a Sermon which I preached at Portland Chapel, March 26th, being inserted in your paper of last Thursday: having obtained a sight of it, my astonishment was great in reading it; and I was truly surprised that any man who had the least value for truth, could invent so many flagrant falsehoods, and make so many false conclusions; such misrepresentations I have never seen in print before: although I consider the man who is guilty of such vile slander, and base calumny, void of any good principle; yet I will not render railing for railing, for every one who is a follower of the Saviour, should copy after his example; who, when he was reviled, he reviled not again, but committed himself to him who judged righteously. However, this does not prohibit a man from vindicating himself in the face of his enemies; and as you have manifested so much impartiality towards an inhabitant of Cheltenham, as to insert his remarks on my Sermon, I hope you will manifest the same impartiality towards a stranger, in inserting in your next paper these remarks.

I have preached at Portland Chapel six times, and I always preach what I believe, and believe what I preach ; and as many of the inhabitants of Cheltenham were present that evening, they will bear me witness, that his charges are false and incorrect. In preaching that sermon I made no mention of sect or party, which so much divides the Christian world ; but declared that which I thought most useful to the people then present ; and to show your impartiality, let me, as well as *Amor Veritatis*, request you to publish a short sketch of the sermon itself ; and let an impartial public judge whether it contains such dangerous doctrines, as represented by your correspondent. Had not my name been mentioned by you, while your correspondent hides himself under fiction, I would not have troubled you with a single remark ; for his statement is too glaring a falsehood for any man of intelligence to believe ; and sorry I am to find that the author is no other than the Rev. Mr. BYRON, Minister of the Methodist Chapel, Cheltenham.—The text was (51st Psalm, 12th ver.) “ Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.” My remarks were as follow :

This Psalm contains the penitential language of a repenting sinner ; it was penned by David, after Nathan the Prophet was sent unto him to convince him of his great sin. Had he not been in the hands of a covenant-keeping God, he

would have plunged himself into everlasting woe. God, in giving account of his best servants, records their defects as well as their excellencies ; not that he loves to expose his people's faults, but to show his impartiality. He hates sin as much in his own people, as he does in the ungodly. This is evident in the life of David, who was one of the best men that ever lived. God has given this honourable testimony of him,—that he was a man after his own heart, and that he did that which was right in his sight, and turned not aside from any thing he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, 1st of Kings, chap. xv. ver. 5 ; and for this he had sorrow in his heart—a sword in his house—and God's chastising rod upon himself all the days of his life. God likewise manifests the defects of his people, that they may serve as beacons or warning posts to us, that we might shun the sins they fell into, and pray for divine keeping in every thing. Man, who takes a licence to sin, from the fall of David, wears the black mark of ungodliness on his forehead. In the fall of David, we may see, indeed, that however great a man's grace may be, if left of God, there is no sin too great for him to fall into ; only in the hands of God are we safe. But how great was the mercy of God, to send Nathan with his powerful message, which brought David to repentance, and the acknowledgement of his

sin; and although God pardoned David, David could never pardon himself.

In the text David prays for two things ; first, a restoration of the joy of God's salvation—secondly, establishment by God's free spirit. In the first, we may notice the faith, the experience, and the practice of David. He believed that salvation was of the Lord ; the contrivance, the accomplishment, and the application are his work : and every good man is a possessor of the same faith ; he believes that salvation is of the Lord ; he cannot think of being a worker with God, in the matter of his salvation ; God's salvation is full, free, and finished ; and it is the Holy Spirit's work to apply that salvation to the souls of the saved ; and under the influence of that spirit they live to God. David once knew the joy of that salvation, by a sweet experience of it. He rejoiced in the God of salvation, as his shield, his tower of defence, and his God. He experienced the joy of the blessings of salvation, *pardon, peace, communion and fellowship with God,* and rejoiced in hope of his glory. But he had lost his sweet enjoyment, and it may be that there are some here who bewail the same loss this night.

We must distinguish between God's salvation, and the joy of that salvation ; the one may be lost, the other never can ; for it is an everlasting salvation. But the joy of God's salvation is sub-

ject to many changes ; and others, as well as David, are constrained to pray, " Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."—But why does the Lord withhold the joy of salvation from his own people ? It must be acknowledged that God sometimes acts as a sovereign in this. He sometimes withholds it to convince us that this is not our rest,—to teach us to live by faith, and to make us more earnest for that glorious land, where the inhabitants thereof shall never say, I am sick.— But in general the cause is in us : a worldly spirit, a legal self-righteous spirit, and a slothful spirit, are robbers of our spiritual joy : a worldly spirit will soon steal the heart from God, then he hides himself : a legal spirit will put us to seek some qualification in ourselves, and for want of that qualification we have no joy : and a slothful spirit puts us off our guard, so that we are exposed to the snare of our enemy, and are liable to fall into some sin ; and when a man falls into sin, all his spiritual joys are gone ; for joy in sin, and joy in God's salvation, can never rule in the same heart : a spirit of sloth indisposes us towards divine things, and, as a canker, will destroy our spiritual joy. A godly man, who is slothful in reading the word, private prayer, attention on the outward means, and self-examination, will find that his joy in God's salvation will be very languid. If there are any here, who bewail their loss, let them repair to Christ, and imitate David

in prayer for a restoration of the joy of God's salvation.

The second part of David's prayer is for an establishment by God's free spirit ; David was not only earnest for the joy of God's salvation, but for the upholding of his free spirit. He was jealous of himself, and the import of his prayer, is, Lord leave me not to myself, lest I should fall again, but uphold me with thy free spirit. Only in the hand of God can we be safe---may we, as well as David, pray for divine keeping ; he prayed for it, and doubtless God granted him his request. The subject will serve to enforce the necessity of watchfulness, of diligence, and of prayer ; our enemies are always on the watch ; David only went to the house top, to take an idle walk without his guard, and he was taken in his enemy's snare. Slothfulness gives great advantage to our enemies ; Satan is a diligent adversary, going about seeking whom he may devour : it should teach us, above every thing, the necessity of prayer. By prayer, we keep near to God, we engage God on our side ; let us then approach a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of need.

J. REES,

*Minister of Redborough Tabernacle,
Gloucestershire.*

Cheltenham, 7th April, 1817.

To the Editor of the Cheltenham Chronicle.

SIR,—Having read in your last week's paper, Mr. REES's observation on his Sermon of the 26th of March, which containing the Antinomian doctrine, you will oblige me by inserting the following remarks. As I was also present when he preached this sermon, (in which he expressed himself stronger and more particular than in his printed statement of it,) I cannot be mistaken in his opinions, when I take them from his printed paper, in which he says “We must distinguish between God's salvation, and the joy of that salvation—the one may be lost, the other never can, for it is an everlasting salvation.” Now Mr. R. will no doubt acknowledge his doctrine in the two following positions: they are contained in the quotation above—he also explained them most minutely and repeatedly from his pulpit; and they are known to be the tenets of that class of people called Antinomians:—
1. That God, prior to their creation, elected certain individuals, who should be saved, without any reference to their moral or religious character. 2. That no exertion on their part can be admitted as a means of attaining that salvation.

Now, sir, I have read, studied, and searched

for truth in the sacred books, for near twenty years, and never found a section that could be fairly so construed ; but have found the reverse, glowing most clearly and distinctly through all its pages, from Moses to the Revelations. The Antinomian doctrine has its foundation on individual predestination ; or, as Mr. R. has it, “ that sin cannot deprive an elect of his salvation, for it is a finished salvation,” which implies his being predestined to it. Now if a part of mankind are elected, or predestined to be saved, the rest are equally so to condemnation. How does this bear with “ God’s so loving the world, that he gave his only Son to redeem it ” ?—“ That God desireth not the death of a sinner ” ?—“ That there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that is saved, than over ninety-nine just men ” ? Moses, in all his laws and injunctions to the Israelites, offers rewards to the obedient, and menaces the disobedient. The Prophets do the same ; and our Saviour invites the people to turn to him and be saved—and says, Why will ye die ? He sent his disciples to preach the Gospel to all the world, that whoever would repent and believe in him should have eternal life. He calls all to “ come and drink freely of the waters of life, without price ; ” “ Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” All his parables bear the same construction ; the prodigal son—the invitation to

the supper—the talents—the figtree—the tares—the seed sown in good and bad soil—the unjust judge—the whole of his sermon on the mount—his invitation and call to sinners that they should seek for grace—knock and it shall be opened—seek and ye shall find—ask and ye shall have; all forming an immense mass of importunities to mankind to accept the terms of salvation, all of which necessarily imply the will on the part of mankind either to accept or reject it; for if God had predestined who should be saved, and, as consequently, who should be lost, of what use could these blessed importunities and calls of our Saviour be?

To shew the consequences of this doctrine in a more familiar point of view, suppose a teacher enacted certain rules of discipline for his pupils, that rewards were proposed for those who obeyed, and punishment for the disobedient. Now God must know who would obey, and who disobey;—but who would presume to assert that he doomed the one or the other? who would thus dare to impute sin to the Deity? Moreover, if man be predestined, you at once strip him of all discrimination and control—he becomes a mere passive machine in the creation, incapable of responsibility, and consequently no more liable to judgment than the planets that travel their destined rounds. And further, if mankind are pre-elected to salvation and condemnation,

as this doctrine implies, all those who are condemned, of course, the Saviour could not have died for: yet we are told, “that as in Adam all die, so in Christ all were made alive.” He declares that he came to save the world. Now if any one person was ever created without a possibility of being saved, he must have been created for condemnation, and consequently the Saviour could not have died for him; and this at once contradicts his assertion, that “God delights not in the death of a sinner,” for if he created them for the purpose of condemnation, he must will them to it—and what he wills he must delight in. And can it be conceived that our gracious God, who so loved the world that he planned the scheme of redemption, that infinite mercy should blend with inexorable justice, by which the fallen race should be reconciled to him through the Son of his Love,—can it be conceived that this merciful Creator should yield the palm of victory to Satan, and create from unconscious matter a never-ending succession of beings, whom he clothes with immortality, for the express purpose of making them the receptacles of endless torments? And this is absolutely imputed to God, by all who believe in pre-election or individual predestination. Is it to be believed that the earth ever teemed with a creature thus made for certain and eternal destruction?—In fine, if this doctrine be true,

this seemingly fair creation is a capacious brooding of creatures, endowed with immortality, merely to perpetuate endless torment; and as the flux of time rolls through into eternity, fraught with the ever-teeming and countless millions of these ill-fated beings, the Deity looks down, and snatches a partial and favoured few from eternal destruction, according to what he has doomed before they were created. Now I will defy Mr. R. to produce the character of any one human being, from the History of the Earth, that is half so cruel and unjust as this Deity; for HE cannot mean the God of back-sliding Israel--the God of long-suffering and of mercy, who sent his Son to redeem the human race, who, while in agonies upon the cross, called on his Father to forgive his murderers whom he came to save. Are not all the children of the earth of his creation, "who desireth not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his wickedness and live?"

The next position is, That no exertion on our part is necessary, or can be admitted to attain salvation. What then does our Saviour mean by the injunctions and absolute necessity which he lays on our taking up our cross--of our fighting the good fight of faith--seeking and striving--working out our salvation with fear and trembling--giving all we have for the pearl of great value, &c.? When the young man, in the Gospel, asked

the Saviour what he should do to be saved, he told him, "to sell all he had, and give it to the poor, and follow him." Was no mental exertion, no will required to do this?—yet Jesus said he loved him. Here we see one whom the Saviour loved and called, and yet he rejected his call; but we shall perhaps be told that he was not one of the elect. To which I reply, how then could Jesus love him?—In fact, the whole of this doctrine appears, as far as I can discover, as having no authority in **HOLY WRIT**, and is besides in open violation to those conceptions stamped on our mind by the Creator, of what is benevolent and equitable. And lastly, it is in the highest degree speculative and dangerous, fraught with consequences likely to produce despair and suicide in many, who might consider themselves, by this partial doctrine, as reprobated and precluded from the possibility of salvation; while others would become infidels, from disgust: for, if such doctrines are indeed believed to be contained in the Bible, we need not be astonished that it should be sometimes found on the same shelf with the Koran and the Fables of Veeshnu. And I much fear that many are thus driven to suicide and infidelity, by this most absurd and mischievous doctrine of individual predestination.

A SEEKER OF TRUTH.

To the Editor of the Cheltenham Chronicle.

SIR,—As you have given repeated proofs to the public of your *candour* and impartiality, through the medium of your paper, you will much oblige me by inserting the following reply to a letter of the 10th instant, of the Rev. Mr. REES, of Rodborough. I allow, with you, that a newspaper is not the most proper channel for the discussion of religious subjects; but it is the only one, at present, with which we can reach the persons concerned: and suffer me to say, that religion ought to be the immediate concern of every rational being; and in my opinion, no vehicle can be improper, that will lead an immortal spirit to reflect on that world of which he is soon to be an inhabitant.

But of many it may be said, with Hawkesworth, "They lie down to sleep---they rise up to trifles;" or with Addison, "They make provision for this life, as though it were never to have an end---and for the other, as though it were never to have a beginning." We are all hastening down the fleeting stream of time into the ocean of eternity. How may we appear with the approbation of our Judge, at the last great day, "for which all other days were made?" is a question of vast importance, not only to the Ministers of the

Gospel, but to the whole human race. It is, sir, with that day in view, and in the spirit I wish to be found in a dying hour, or day of judgment, I reply to the Rev. Mr. Rees's remarks ; and am sorry to say, that instead of answering the letter written by **AMOR VERITATIS**, or confuting the remarks made, he has only fired a volley of invectives at my character---and after given me up as " a person void of any good principle," he immediately says, he will not return railing for railing.

In the letter he alludes to, and imputes to me, there is not a single reflection on the moral character of Mr. R., nor any Minister supplying Portland Chapel: there is no railing ; nor shall any thing personal ever drop from my pen, if I can possibly avoid it. Not so with my Rev. Friend---he begins with personal abuse, and yet says he will not rail. To many this might appear great inconsistency ; but it is real, perfect Antinomian politeness ; for Antinomians have a faculty which no other class of beings can attain unto : as their religious creed begins before the first chapter of Genesis, so they can in their mysterious conduct blow hot and cold, good and evil, life and death, with the same breath. This I may be permitted to say, to such of my readers as are strangers to me and my conduct, that the epithets so freely given by the Rev. Mr. Rees, do not at all belong to me ;---for more than thirty

years I have endeavoured to live peaceably with all men---to love the Ministers of Jesus Christ, for their work's sake ; and for my spirit of candour to Christians of different denominations, I might appeal to his own neighbourhood, and to his own church ! I have the honour and happiness to enjoy the friendship of some hundreds of Ministers, and some thousands of pious and respectable friends, who could, if needful, contradict Mr. R.; but I hope, when cool, he will, from conscience, contradict himself : certainly the public, and the laws of the country will expect that my Rev. Friend will either come forth and prove his assertions, or retract those *very improper expressions.* ---If he do not one or the other, I do not conceive how he will maintain his character, either as a gentleman or a Christian.

Respecting the Sermon preached by Mr. R. on the 26th of March, on which the remarks were made, a gentleman, who, in the spirit of humility, signs himself a "Seeker of truth," in your Chronicle of the 17th, has, in my opinion, fairly stated and fully confuted Mr. R.'s doctrine. I could refresh Mr. Rees's memory in several things he brought forward in his sermon, which do not appear in his printed statement ; but to take the subject in its most guarded and covered manner, it evidently appears I did not mistake his meaning, nor even his words.

The sum of the doctrine may be considered

in these two points :—1st. Man cannot work with God in the matter of his salvation ; 2nd. This salvation cannot be lost by sin, for it is “*free, full and finished.*” If this doctrine were true, I ask, what becomes of the Justice of God ? If a man, by divine grace, be capable of choosing or refusing, he is capable of virtue or vice, and of course a proper object of praise or blame. But on Mr. Rees’s scheme, men are mere machines—all is unchangably and unconditionally decreed. Mahomet said, the sword is the key of heaven and hell :—but this Predestinarian saith, No, election and reprobation are the keys of heaven and hell ; God acts irresistibly on the elect, and has commissioned Satan to operate on the reprobate. This is certainly the import of his representation—for if we speak properly, man cannot be said to act at all. Can a stone be said to act, when it is thrown out of a sling ; or a ball, when it is projected from a cannon ? No more can a man be said to act :—if he be moved by force, he cannot resist ; for if this scheme be true, the sinner can no more help sinning, than a stone falling—the elect can no more help moving, or flying towards heaven, than a cannon ball can help flying towards the sun, if directed to it : but if the case be thus, there is no possible room for virtue or vice, for rewards or punishments. As to its freeness, we have seen, that, so far from its being free, it is *forced,*

—men having no more choice left them than stocks or stones.—Again, our author says it is FULL, but of what he does not say,—only this, it is so full of the elect, that there is not a niche or corner left, to admit one more, of all the millions that are perishing through reprobation. How very different is the scripture account of the voice of the Redeemer—“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”

Further, we are informed by Mr. R. it is a finished salvation: this is a very favourite expression of some Ministers, but, in my opinion, not to be found in the oracle of God. Persons accustomed to speak plain English, and not Antinomian logic, think that there is an essential difference between the beginning and end of any subject; of a journey—of a conflict—of life and death; but their jargon blends and confounds all degrees of salvation in one. If this doctrine be real—the work of salvation be finished—the number sealed—the warfare accomplished, we ought to give the favoured few all their privilege, let them sleep on and take their rest. But let us not torment the poor reprobate before his time of suffering his finished *perdition*.

Permit me to say, on this scheme, that I think we Ministers are not only the most inconsistent, but the most useless class of beings under heaven:—in conscience we ought to change, not

only our cloth but our profession, to something that is not yet **FINISHED**, and convert our churches and chapels to something useful to the poor of our parishes : as to salvation, they cannot be useful ; it is complete, and cannot be lost. All the preaching and praying in the universe cannot help one reprobate spirit ; and not any neglect of the means can injure one elect soul. All that sin itself can deprive them of, Mr. Rees being witness, is the joy of their salvation. If this be so, how blind and legal must have been Moses and the Prophets, the Apostles and Martyrs, the Confessors, the Reformers, and all the army of pious self-denying cross bearers of former times ? Had they been favoured with a little eye-salve from Mr. Rees, they might have enjoyed all the pleasures of sin for a season, without the least injury to their salvation.

Upon this Antinomian axiom, allowed by Mr. Rees, I take for my lever one grain of reason, and ask every unprejudiced person, who is capable to conclude that two and two make four, whether we may not, without any magical power, *heave morality out of the world*, or *Antinomian dotage and blasphemy out of the church* ? If no man can be a worker with God in the matter of his salvation, and no sin can interrupt salvation, or invalidate a Christian's title to glory, Mr. Rees must yield to my just conclu-

sion, or give up his dangerous premises. I would ask, can any man in his senses stake his soul on such a doctrine? I had almost said, that it is impossible for any man, upon cool reflection, to believe it; and how any person who professes to believe the bible to be the revelation of God, can make such assertions to the public, I cannot conceive. The plain unequivocal consequences of receiving such doctrine, is either *presumption* or *despair*: but to men who think for themselves, it must clearly appear, that, at the same time it destroys all virtue and vice, by turning men into mere machines---so it also pours the most blasphemous contempt on all the attributes of Deity---on his love---wisdom---truth---justice---and even on sovereignty itself. But, sir, the moment a man is considered as a candidate for heaven, a probationer for a blissful immortality---the moment you allow him what true free grace bestows upon him, that is, a day of salvation, with a talent of light and rectified free agency, to enable him to work for life faithfully promised, as well as from life freely imparted; the moment, I say, you allow this, all the divine perfections shine with unsullied lustre; and, as reason and majesty returned to Nebuchadnezzar, after his pitiable degradation, so consistency and native dignity are restored to the abused oracles of God.---I will conclude, sir, in the language of a celebrated poet,

“ Blame not the bowels of the Deity :
 Man shall be blessed as far as man permits.
 Not man alone, all rationals, Heav’n arms
 With an illustrious, but tremendous power
 To counteract its own most gracious ends :
 And this of strict necessity, not choice :
 That power denied, Men, Angels, were no more
 But passive engines void of praise or blame.
 Heaven wills our happiness, allows our doom ;
 Invites us ardently, but not compels :
 Heaven but persuades, almighty man decrees :
 Man is the maker of immortal fates ;
 Man falls by man, if finally he falls.

I remain, sir, your’s, in the bonds of a free, pure
 and peaceful gospel, praying for the salvation of
 a lost world,

JAS. BYRON,

*Minister of the Ebenezer Chapel
 King Street, Cheltenham,*

April 22d, 1817.